

Message Text

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R 070715Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6656

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TAIPEI 1383

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TW

SUBJECT: GROC'S POLICY TOWARDS NON-KMT POLITICIANS

REF: TAIPEI 1106

1. SUMMARY. INCREASING POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF NON-KMT POLITICIANS HAS PRESENTED THE GROC/KMT ESTABLISHMENT WITH A DILEMMA: HOW TO LIMIT, OR EVEN DECREASE, INDEPENDENT POLITICAL INFLUENCE WITHOUT INDUCING A BACKLASH OF POPULAR RESENTMENT. TO THIS END, THE ESTABLISHMENT, UNDER THE PREMIER'S LEADERSHIP, HAS ADOPTED A POLICY OF COMBINING WARNINGS AND CAJOLERY, TOGETHER WITH EXPLICIT CONDEMNATION OF "TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE." THIS IS LIKELY TO KEEP THE INDEPENDENTS OFF BALANCE AT LEAST FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, BUT THE POLICY'S EFFECTIVENESS WILL BE CHALLENGED INCREASINGLY AS INDEPENDENTS BEGIN TO

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ORGANIZE IN ANTICIPATION OF THE DECEMBER ELECTIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SEATS IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY BODIES. IT IS HARD TO TELL HOW THE ESTABLISHMENT WILL REACT TO INCREASING INDEPENDENT INFLUENCE OVER THE LONG RUN. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ESTABLISHMENT'S SOFT APPROACH TO THE INDEPENDENTS HAS BEEN WELL PUBLICIZED. THERE HAVE BEEN FLAT-

TERING VISITS BY THE PREMIER TO LOCAL NON-KMT POLITICIANS ELECTED IN THE NOVEMBER 1977 ELECTIONS. SHORTLY AFTER THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THE PREMIER HOSTED A LUNCHEON FOR SOME 200 NON-KMT ASSEMBLYMEN (63 YOUNG CHINA PARTY MEMBERS, 37 DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS AND 81 INDEPENDENTS) AT WHICH HE EMPHASIZED THAT ALL WHO SUPPORT THE THREE PEOPLE'S PRINCIPLES AND ARE ANTI-COMMUNIST ARE FRIENDS AND COMRADES REGARDLESS OF PARTY AFFILIATION. (THIS FOLLOWED 2 LUNCHESES FOR KMT ASSEMBLYMEN.) AT THE SAME TIME, THE KMT'S CENTRAL STANDING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAS ORDERED THE PARTY BUREACURACY TO MAKE A CONCRETE PLAN FOR ESTABLISHING CLOSER COOPERATIVE TIES WITH OVER 400 NON-KMT POLITICANS IN THE CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. THE PREMIER RECENTLY GAVE PROMINENT INDEPENDENT LIGISLATOR K'ANG NING-HSIANG GREAT FACE WHEN HE PERSONALLY ANSWERED K'ANG'S ORAL INTERPELLATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN WITH A DENIAL THAT THE KMT HAD ANY SPECIAL PRIVILEGES IN THE ROC AND GAVE REAFFIRMATION OF GRADUAL "STEP BY STEP" PROGRESS TOWAJD GREATER DEMOCRACY.

3. THE ESTABLISHMENT HAS HEDGED ITS DEMOCRATIC BLANDISHMENTS WITH WARNINGS NOT TO PUSH TOO HARD TOO FAST. THIS WAS EVIDENT IN THE PREMIER'S ORAL ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (REFTEL) AND AGAIN IN THE PREMIER'S MARCH 1 REPORT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN WHICH HE PLEDGED THAT THE GROC WOULD

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"CARRY OUT THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM OF RULE BY LAW" AND "PREVENT DEMOCRATIC DEVIATIONS AND ABUSE OF FREEDOM AND ATTAIN ORDERLY DEMOCRACY AND DISCIPLINED FREEDOM." THE INDEPENDENCE OF TAIWAN, WHICH MANY ESTABLISHMENTARIANS SEE AS THE GOAL OF MOST TRULY INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS, WAS ROUNDLY CONDEMNED BY THE PREMIER IN THE SAME SPEECH IN AN UNPRECEDENTLY STRONG AND DIRECT WAY: "THE ABSURDITY OF A SO-CALLED 'INDEPENDENT TAIWAN TO SAFEGUARD THE TAIWANESE FROM COMMUNIST RULE' IS IN FACT A PRETEXT THAT HAS BEEN FABRICATED FOR THE CHINESE COMMUNIST INVASION OF TAIWAN. THIS IS AN ILLUSION GROWING OUT OF LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, OBLIVIOUSNESS TO ORIGIN AND THE SELF-SEEKING OF DISGRACE AND DESTRUCTION...THE 'TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE' ABSURDITY IS COMPLETELY INTOLERABLE TO EVERY PATRIOTIC CHINESE."

4. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO JUDGE THE EFFECT THIS COMBINED SOFT-AND-HARD APPROACH WILL HAVE ON INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS. THE LATTER ARE WELL AWARE OF THE KMT'S DESIRE TO BRING THEM BACK INTO THE FOLD, OR AT LEAST NEUTRALIZE THEIR INFLUENCE. THEY BELIEVE THE PARTY IS CONCENTRATING ITS BLANDISHMENTS ON A FEW PIVOTAL FIGURES

SUCH AS INFLUENTIAL PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLYMAN CHIU LIEN-HUI, WHO WAS KICKED OUT OF THE KMT FOR RUNNING WITHOUT THE PARTY'S NOMINATION. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT'S CURRENT POLICY WILL HAVE MUCH SUCCESS BEYOND KEEPING THE INDEPENDENTS OFF BALANCE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. AFTER THAT, AND PARTICULARLY AS THE DECEMBER ELECTIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SEATS IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY BODIES DRAW NEAR, WE EXPECT TO SEE MORE ORGANIZATION AMONG INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS, PERHAPS EVEN CULMINATING IN SOME FORM OF AN OPPOSITION PARTY.

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5. MOVEMENT TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A REAL OPPOSITION PARTY IS CLEARLY ANATHEMA TO THE ESTABLISHMENT, YET IT WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO REPRESS SUCH A MOVEMENT WITHOUT CREATING A STRONG POPULAR BACKLASH. INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES ARE AWARE THAT THEY HAVE TAPPED A LARGE RESERVOIR OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT FEELING IN LAST NOVEMBER'S ELECTIONS. NON-KMT POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS FURTHER SUPPORTED BY A PERVASIVE, UNDEFINED AND LATENT FEELING THAT TAIWAN SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY TAIWANESE AND NOT BE CONTROLLED BY THE MAINLAND OR BY MAINLANDERS. FORTUNATELY, BOTH SIDES SEEM TO BE PROCEEDING CAUTIOUSLY AND, FOR THE TIME BEING, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT EITHER WILL CAST ITSELF IN A FORM THE OTHER FINDS TOTALLY OBJECTION-

ABLE.

6. UNDERLYING THE ESTABLISHMENT'S DILEMMA OF HOW TO COPE WITH THE INDEPENDENTS IS A MORE BASIC PROBLEM WHICH HAS
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YET TO BE RESOLVED, OR EVEN GENERALLY DISCUSSED: CAN THE KMT BECOME A PARTY CONTROLLED BY TAIWANESE AND OPERATE IN A MORE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM WITHOUT LOSING ITS DOMINANT ROLE? ALTHOUGH THE KMT MEMBERSHIP IS OVERWHELMINGLY TAIWANESE, IT IS STILL CONTROLLED BY MAINLANDERS AND, ALTHOUGH TAIWANESE WILL INEVITABLY INHERIT CONTROL, THEY WILL NOT BE TAIWANESE WITH THE LEADERSHIP ABILITY TO GUIDE THE PARTY SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH THE TRANSITION; PEOPLE LIKE HSU HSIN-LIANG, CHANG CHUN-HUNG AND SU NAN-CHENG ARE LEAVING THE PARTY TO STRIKE OUT AS INDEPENDENTS AND THEIR SUCCESS MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE PARTY TO ATTRACT NEW TALENT. TAIWANESE WILL FIND LITTLE TO ATTRACT THEM TO THE PARTY SHOULD IT LOSE WHAT HAS BEEN ITS VIRTUAL MONOPOLY ON POWER AND PATRONAGE.

7. FOR THE TIME BEING, SIGNIFICANT INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY WILL PROBABLY REMAIN CONFINED TO THE "PROVINCIAL" LEVEL. THE ELECTIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SEATS IN THE CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BODIES, EVEN UNDER THE UNLIKELY CIRCUMSTANCES OF AN INDEPENDENT SWEEP, WOULD ONLY marginally INCREASE INDEPENDENTS' POWER IN THESE INSTITUTIONS WHICH WILL REMAIN DOMINATED BY KMT MAINLANDERS FOR MANY YEARS. BUT AS NON-KMT POWER INCREASES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, THE MAINLANDER'S SENSE OF THREAT IS LIKELY TO GROW. IF THE KMT SHOULD RESPOND BY TRYING TO PREVENT THE INDEPENDENTS FROM TRANSLATING THEIR LOCAL POWER INTO SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, THERE WOULD INEVITABLY DEVELOP A STRONG SENSE OF FRUSTRATION AMONG THE INDEPENDENTS. TO SHOW HOW TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WILL BE THE MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR BOTH THE KMT AND THE INDEPENDENTS OVER THE COMING YEARS.

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